

Dog Park Tips

DOG PARKS ARE NOT A PLACE FOR CHILDREN

Keep children under 12 years of age at your side and in your control at all times

- This is a dog park, not a children's park. Not all dogs are child friendly. Never allow a child to approach or pet a strange dog without the owner's presence or approval
- A running squealing or screaming child may incite dogs to behave aggressively
- Children should stay away from playing dogs. Playing dogs may unintentionally knock down a small child
- Direct eye contact is confrontational to dogs. An interested child staring into a dog's face may provoke a dog unintentionally
- Do not let children bring toys or food to the park. A friendly dog might knock down your child to get a toy or food

CANINE BEHAVIOR

Play Styles- Be aware that dogs have different play styles. Educate yourself about dog behavior. Behavior that concerns some dog guardians may simply be a rambunctious play style. Always respect another dog's guardian's wishes if they are not comfortable with how your dog is interacting with theirs. Simply move to another area of the park for a while. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner or having a bad day.

Move Around - Walking defuses defensive behavior and keeps off-leash areas a neutral territory. This means your dog is more likely to just pass by another dog with a sniff-sniff rather than a stare-down. Sometimes, when people stand around, the dogs may become protective of their people and their space, making scuffles more likely to occur.

Keep Learning - Be a responsible dog guardian. Keep licenses and vaccinations up to date, spay or neuter your dog, train your dog in basic obedience, educate yourself about dog behavior and join the organizations that support the dog park!

CANINE CONFLICTS- Prevention: The 4 Warning signs

Posture: A dog's body language can communicate fear, hostility or submission. Learn to read and respond to your own dog's body language

Packing: More than 4 or 5 dogs packed together can lead to trouble. Break it up before it starts by leading your dog to a neutral territory at least 30 feet away

Possession: Whether it's you, a ball, or a treat, most dogs will protect what's theirs. Remain aware and don't bring toys or treats into the park

Provoking: If your dog is continuously annoying another dog or dogs, or provoking attention, it's time to leave the park:

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT A FIGHT

Pay attention to your dog and be aware of where and what they are doing at all times Stay close enough to control or protect your dog in the face of a potential fight

Keep a collar on your dog at all times to have something to grab if needed

Keep walking. Walking defuses defensive behavior and keeps off-leash areas a neutral territory. Avoid the temptation to stand around and chat or sit in one place for very long. When folks congregate, many dogs may become protective of their people and their space, making scuffles likely to occur

Leave the Park. Some days it is just a bad mix. Go for a walk and come back later. You and your dog will be better off.

WHAT TO DO IF A FIGHT OCCURS

- Never reach your hand into the middle of a dog fight. You may be bitten, possibly by your own dog
- Distract dogs and divert their attention. A blast of water from a bottle or a loud whistle may work
- If your dog is not in the fight, make sure he doesn't join in
- If a fight occurs, control your dog and move him to neutral territory
- Maintain a cool head. Getting upset and yelling will only add to the frenzy
- When necessary, exchange contact information with the other dog owners